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# Cloud Formations



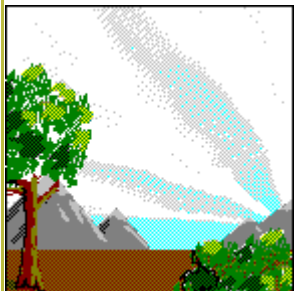



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In 1802 an Englishman by the name of Luke Howard invented the cloud naming system that is still in use today. Howard used Latin names to describe clouds. (The first part of a cloud's name describes height, the second part shape.)

The prefixes denoting heights are: cirro, high clouds above 20,000 feet, alto and mid level clouds between 6,000 - 20,000 feet. There is no prefix for low level clouds.

The names denoting shapes are: cirrus mean curly or fibrous, stratus means layered, while cumulus means lumpy or piled.

Nimbo or nimbus is added to indicate that a cloud can produce precipitation.

<b>Cirrus</b>		<p>These clouds look like white delicate feathers. They are generally white wispy forms.</p>
<b>Cirrocumulus</b>		<p>These clouds are thin white layers with a texture giving them the look of patches of cotton or ripples without shadows. They contain very cold water droplets.</p>
<b>Cirrostratus</b>		<p>These clouds are a thin, transparent, whitish layer made up of ice crystals. They may totally or partly cover the sky and could possibly create a halo appearance around the sun.</p>
<b>Altostratus</b>		<p>These clouds look like waves of the sea with white and grey coloring and shadows. They contain mostly water droplets or ice crystals.</p>
<b>Altostratus</b>		<p>These clouds form a bluish or greyish veil that totally or partially covers the sky. The light of the sun can be seen through them but there is no halo effect.</p>
<b>Cumulonimbus</b>		<p>These are very large, heavy, and dense clouds. They have a generally flat, dark surface with very tall and large tops like the shape of a massive mountain or anvil. These clouds are often associated with lightning, thunder and sometimes hail. They may also produce a tornado.</p>

## Cumulus



These clouds have a flat base and a dense, mound-shaped top that resembles a large cauliflower. Where the sun hits these clouds it is a brilliant white. The base tends to be a darker color. They generally do not produce precipitation.

## Nimbostratus



This is a very dark and grey colored cloud layer that blots out the light of the sun. It is massive and has a continuous fall of precipitation.

## Stratocumulus



These clouds are a grey or whitish color. The bases of these clouds tend to be more round than flat. They can be formed from old stratus clouds or from cumulus clouds that are spreading out. Their tops also tend to be flat.

## Stratus



These clouds are grey and lie very close to the surface of the earth. They usually look like a sheet layer but sometimes are found in patches. They rarely produce precipitation.